GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4307
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2000
NEGOTIATIONS FOR ELIMINATING TRADE BARRIERS
GADDE RAMAMOHAN;M.V.V.S MURTHI;SHIVAJI MANE

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether in an effort to restart global trade talks which failed in Seattle last year twenty-one nations of the Asia and Pacific region have again agreed to set a date of 2001 to prepare an agenda and begin negotiations for eliminating trade barriers; (

(b) if so, the details thereof; (

(c) the main suggestions and recommendations made in this regard by the members of Asia and Pacific region; and

(d) the response of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) to (c) : The Ministerial Meeting of theAsia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was held on 12-13 November 2000 in Bandar Seri Bagwan, Brunei Darussalam. While reaffirming their supportto the launch of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations at the earliest opportunity, the APEC Joint Ministerial Statement states that they have agreed that the successful and expeditious launch of a new round requires an agenda that is balanced and sufficiently broad-based to respond to the interests and concerns of all WTO members. With this in mind, they have called on delegations in Geneva to agree on an agenda in 2001 and urged all WTO members to muster the political will and exercise flexibility. They have, inter-alia, commended the confidence building measures adopted in the WTO, including those on market access for the least developed economies and those addressing concerns over aspects of the implementation of WTO agreements. This was also reiterated in the APEC Economic Leaders` Declaration on 16th November 2000.

(d) India is not in favour of overloading the WTO agenda with wide-ranging new round of negotiations and is, in any case, opposed to adding of new non-trade issues on the WTO agenda such as core labour standards, environmental issues, coherent global architecture, investment and competition policy. India is, however, prepared for a few new items being taken up for negotiations, provided implementation issues arising from the Uruguay Round are also resolved to its satisfaction.